

FIRST RECORD OF THE CAPE GANNET *MORUS CAPENSIS* FOR PERU AND THE PACIFIC OCEAN

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The Cape Gannet *Morus capensis* is an endemic seabird to southern Africa, breeding on offshore islands off Namibia and South Africa (Harrison 1985). After breeding, dispersal takes place as far as Mozambique, rarely Tanzania, on the east coast of Africa, and to the Gulf of Guinea on the west (Harrison 1985). However, vagrant birds have been reported in Victoria, Australia (Venn 1982) and on the Atlantic coast of South America, in the Argentinean Patagonia and the Beagle Channel (Bergkamp 1995, Ramírez 1996) at the southern tip of South America.

On 22 July 1999, during the course of fieldwork at Macabí Island (07°48'S, 79°30'W) in northern Peru, Mariano Valverde photographed a strange sulid for the region. It was flying alone around the island for a short time but was not observed to land. The bird was later identified from the photograph (Fig. 1) as an adult Cape Gannet by its yellow head and nape, long gular stripe and its dark primary, secondary and tail feathers (Harrison 1985). This is the first record of the Cape Gannet in Peruvian waters and for the Pacific Ocean.

Macabí is an eight-hectare island, nine kilometres offshore, surrounded by the cold-upwelling waters of the Peruvian Current and supports large numbers of guano birds. Average sea surface temperature around the island during the observation was 15.8°C, below the long-term average for the locality (Moron & Crispin 1999). It is probable that the *El Niño* of 1997/98 could have influenced the dispersal of this vagrant bird in some way, although its exact route remains unknown.

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Fig. 1. The Cape Gannet *Morus capensis* at Macabí Island, Peru.

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